

# With the Plays, Players and the L

"Damaged Goods," the new Eugene Brieux clinical play which was given its premier in New York recently, deals frankly and impressively with the contaminating actualities of the scourge. The play holds nothing for the prurient and still less for the prudish. Its chief plea is that the insupportable, but nevertheless actual taboo which is in force against the frank consideration of a menace against public health, should be removed.

The Medical Review of Reviews' Sociological Fund, under whose auspices the play was brought to America, seeks to combat the most powerful prejudice in America, the refusal to permit a free discussion of a peril which now is appropriately talked about only in the medical schools.

"Damaged Goods" presents a young man who, on the eve of his marriage, has consulted an eminent specialist and has discovered that he is contaminated.

It is set forth that he has been a more than usually upright young man, but that subsequent to a wine bout he has the ill fortune to encounter that which others have escaped.

He is pledged to marry the daughter of his father's friend, a young woman of beauty, high social estate and rich. The doctor forbids him to marry for five years, and there ensues an argument, during which the physician lays before him the horrible probabilities of a marriage. The young man bitterly insists that it is impossible for him to delay the ceremony for more than six months. He argues that he may be one of the luck 5 per centum who escape. He demonstrates that to tell the truth will ruin him and rob him of the girl he loves. In return the physician arrays more facts and remains adamant in his demand that there shall be no marriage. The argument, which consumes the entire first act of the play, ends with the departure of the young man in anger from the doctor's office.

Some eighteen months have elapsed when the action of the play is resumed. The marriage has taken place and a girl baby has been born. It develops that the young man had delayed the wedding for half a year, in the meantime placing himself in the hands of a quack who, ostensibly, was treating him for an infection of the lungs.

The charming young couple is making a lace cap for her baby when the husband arrives from his business, and there ensues a scene of demonstrative love and affection which, in view of the fore-knowledge of the audience, is powerful in its pitiousness. Each embrace makes the on-looker shudder.

It soon develops, through the arrival of the young man's mother, that the family physician has found that the infant requires the services

of a specialist, and the doctor whose warning had not been heeded is summoned. It is then discovered that contamination has extended to the nurse, who leaves, finding out the truth, to go to her own child and to her husband, and thus, with a terrible certainty, the farther dissemination of the plague is indicated.

The nurse denounces the family as she leaves, and the young wife, who has been attracted to the room by the sound of loud speech, is thus apprised of her calamitous situation.

She spurns her husband as a loathsome creature, who has betrayed her, and with a cry of anguish, which comes as a climax to a highly effective dramatic scene, she falls fainting to his floor.

In the final act of the play the play the young wife's father calls on the physician to secure a certificate on which a divorce may be obtained, but the specialist enlists his services as a member of the chamber of deputies in an effort to enact laws and arouse public sentiment for a frank and honest dealing with the menace. He introduces two other victims, who tell their stories to the deputy, and the various ramifications of the subject are spread before him.

The effect of the play is wholesome. In it no vulgarity and no unnecessary facts are permitted to appear. It offers the strongest of arguments against the hypocrisy, and makes a tremendous appeal for the decencies.



CRESSY AND DAYNE

Rare entertainers who will return to the Orpheum next week.

David Belasco, who moves in a mysterious way to discover his plays and players, is preparing another pupil of his dramatic doctrines to make her real debut before the theatre-going public of New York.

This is apropos of the announcement yesterday that Miss Helen Freeman is to have the leading role in the trial production of a new play that Mr. Belasco will make late in the spring.

Only once before has the young actress appeared before a New York public. This was in the leading role of "Tainted Philanthropy" on the occasion when Judge Holt ordered a double performance of this play and "The Woman" as final evidence in an important case. After the performance just two names were on every one's lips—David Belasco, because of his courage in offering the two plays, and Helen Freeman, because of her convincing performance. Then nothing more was heard of her.

Back on the stages of the Belasco and Republic theatres, however, she has been a busy little worker. Mr. Belasco gave her the understudies of all the important roles in "The Governor's Lady" and later assigned her to similar work with "Years of Discretion" and "A Good Little Devil."

Thus in the course of a few months she has studied and privately acted, under his supervision, eleven different parts—ready to jump in and play any one of them at a minute's notice. Now finally, the moment of her reward draws near.

At last the courts have decided that an actor must consider his dressing room his place of business—his office, as it were. After nearly seven years of legal scrapping, Henry Kolker, former star with "The Great Name," and more recently in "Our Wives," has been found in contempt of court, and ordered to pay \$110, nearly the amount involved in the suit, or go to jail.

The case is interesting, in that it lets actors and actresses know where they stand so far as a place of business is concerned. Although flitting from pillar to post, they carry with them their business address. They just take it around in their traveling bags, as it were.

Next week's bill at the Orpheum theatre ranges from fantastic pantomime to animal theatricals; from cosmopolitan songs to talking pictures, with other features so blended that no reasonable fault should be found with the entertainment as a whole. "Puss in Boots," the headliner, is an elaborate fantastic production that is little short of a big musical comedy. It is the offering of R. A. Rolfe and is said to be one of the most pretentious from every viewpoint of any act now appearing in vaudeville. The star is William J. Kennedy who plays the role of old King Rumphix. David Abrahams, Jr., the famous animal impersonator, will be seen in the title role. Next will come Cressy and Dayne, presenting their absorbing sketch "The Village Lawyer." Mr. Cressy is well known